

[Mr. President]

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or business shall, subject to provisions of sub-rule (3) of Rule 15 be adjourned or postponed accordingly. Or if the motion carried be that the House pass to the business next in order in the list of business, the business then under discussion shall be considered to be disposed of.'

Rule 63 seems to contemplate a certain business actually under the discussion of the House before it can be passed over. So, I would like to consult hon. Members of the House on this question. Without meaning any disparagement to other hon. Members, I would like the lawyer Members of this House to study this question. We will take up this question day-after-tomorrow. I want a well-considered opinion and a ruling to be given for future guidance."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—"Then may I take it that yesterday's proceedings become null and void?" (Laughter.)

K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR :—"Are we going to have a discussion about this in the House?"

MR. PRESIDENT :—"Yes, in the House."

GOVERNMENT BILL.

IV.—THE MADRAS ESTATES LAND (REDUCTION OF RENT) BILL, 1947 (L.A. BILL No. 24 OF 1947).

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—"Mr. President, Sir, I move—

'that the Madras Estates Land (Reduction of Rent) Bill, 1947, as approved by the Assembly be taken into consideration.'

"Sir, the House is probably aware that the Hon. Minister for Land Revenue who is in charge of the Bill is away at Delhi to attend a conference of Revenue Ministers which has been called to consider the problems arising out of the zamindari abolition in the various provinces and I have been entrusted with the task of piloting this Bill through this House. Of course, I shall anticipate the hon. Member Mr. Narayanaswami Nayudu and say that I realize my limitations . . ."

MR. PRESIDENT :—"I would like to put it to the House : the Hon. Minister is expected here this evening; if hon. Members are anxious that the very same Minister who piloted the Bill in the other House should do it in this House also, can we have the Bill day-after-tomorrow? I leave it to the House to decide if hon. Members are very anxious to have the same Hon. Minister."

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—"Day-after-tomorrow is a public holiday being penultimate Saturday."

MR. PRESIDENT :—"I thought we were having the food debate on the 20th instant."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"It is not a matter of choice. If it is a holiday, how can we help it? I do not know. I would suggest instead that the discussion may be taken up tomorrow, sometime in the evening."

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MR. PRESIDENT :—" I have no objection."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The reason is this. Christmas holidays commence, I think, on the 22nd and so we must finish our discussions before this Sunday. If the House is agreeable, we can sit tomorrow after the other House rises."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" There is no question of the other House. In fact we decided to sit day-after-tomorrow as the other House may not finish the consideration of certain rules coming before them before lunch tomorrow."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Then may I suggest that we sit from 8 to 9 p.m. tomorrow? "

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" Sir, there has been no amendment received for this Bill. This Bill has been before the other House and we are all to some extent familiar with it. I have studied the Bill and I may be able, in spite of the limitations that I have, to pilot this Bill in a way that will be satisfactory."

DR. SIR A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" Was this Hon. Minister in the Select Committee, Sir? "

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" No, Sir, I was not in the Select Committee."

DR. SIR A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" Sir, when important Bills are brought before the House, courtesy requires that the Hon. Minister-in-charge of the Bill should be present in the House. I mean no reflection on my hon. Friend who is now piloting the Bill. He will try to do his best and I am sure he will succeed. But this Bill is a contentious measure and I think it is only right that the Hon. Minister in charge of this Bill should be present here. There is of course the loophole by which although one Government Member may be in charge of the Bill, it is open to another Government Member to move it."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Without any misunderstanding, may I say, I entirely agree with the hon. Member. Will he please suggest some method of arrangement of the business now? From day-after-tomorrow practically till the end of this month and till the 2nd January next, the days are all holidays."

DR. SIR A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" Monday and Tuesday next are working days, Sir."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" If the House is very particular, I would suggest we have the food debate to-day and this Bill day-after-tomorrow."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Let us leave aside the food debate for the present. When shall we have this Bill? Shall we take it up on Monday? "

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THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ Why not to-day itself, Sir? ”

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—“ I know that the Hon. the Revenue Minister can do it better. But as no amendment has been given notice of by any hon. Member of this House

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ There is no question of amendments. Hon. Members might raise certain points.”

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—“ I shall try to answer those points.”

SRI B. NARAYANASWAMI NAYUDU :—“ I wish to make this one point. There are limitations no doubt as my hon. Friend wanted to confess. But on one thing there is no limitation at all and that is with regard to the passing of the Bill. There is no limitation there and that is why all these objections are raised. But there will be some consolation at least if the Hon. the Minister in charge of the Bill had been here. Last time, Sir, when we had a labour legislation and the Hon. Minister concerned was not here we had some doubts whether one particular section will apply to certain classes of people and so on. The Minister who was piloting the Bill had to consult the Secretary and do all these things then and there. So I submit that if the Hon. Minister in charge of the Bill can be here on Monday, this Bill should not be taken up till then. Of course, as I said, there is no limitation to the Government's power of carrying it through. If the Hon. Minister in charge of the Bill was here, we could make some representations and they may be considered, if not now, at least later on. The Government have no doubt a limitless majority and there is no limitation there. There is no question of the Hon. Minister being able to pilot the Bill. Anybody can pilot the Bill and take it safely to harbour. There is no need for a pilot at all. Any captain or anybody can do it. There is no question at all on the score of piloting.”

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ Sir, it is not as if the Hon. the Revenue Minister was here and did not turn up. He is attending an All-India Conference of Revenue Ministers where his presence is absolutely necessary. He can by no manner of means reach Madras now. I am simply explaining the position and saying that there is no insult to the House or any disregard for the House at all. It is not possible for him to be present here to pilot the Bill now. On the other hand, another Member of the Government is prepared with the Bill and he can give such information as is required by the hon. Members. Any other thing that may be represented here will be recorded and they will be taken to the notice of the Hon. Minister in charge if hon. Members think it necessary. As it is, I believe the Hon. Minister in charge of the Bill is fairly well informed on the question and we might as well discuss the Bill now.”

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DR. SIR A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" Sir, With regard to the Hon. Minister's observation that no amendment has been given notice of, I should like to say that some of us did not wish to give notice of amendments because there is no use in doing that. Secondly, Sir, the discussion of the Bill is far more important than the moving of amendments. There are certain rules to be framed by the Government on this Bill and the procedure adopted therein may be the subject of criticism. It is not as if this Bill will not be passed. But if the Hon. Member in charge of the Bill were present here, we feel that some of our criticisms might be helpful to him. The only question is whether we cannot have all reasonable facilities of expressing our views on such a contentious measure as this to the Hon. Minister who is in charge of the Bill."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Then we can have this Bill adjourned to to-morrow between 6 to 9 p.m."

(Several hon. Members : "No, no".)

MR. PRESIDENT :—" If hon. Members are agreeable, we will have the food debate to-day after lunch and to-morrow we can have . . ."

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB, BAHADUR :—" We have not brought the food debate papers with us and we are not prepared for it."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The hon. Members know all about it. There has been a debate about it in the other House . . ."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Sir, the Hon. Minister in charge has quoted certain figures and painted a rosy picture of the position. But from the figures that we have, it seems to us that the picture is not rosy . . ."

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" I suggest, we proceed with this Bill. Any suggestions made by hon. Members will be noted down and communicated to the Hon. Minister for Revenue. Whatever suggestions are made here are recorded in shorthand and the Hon. Minister will certainly have the benefit of reading them. To the best of my capacity I will try to answer the points raised in the course of the discussion. With your permission, Mr. President . . ."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Is it so difficult to have the food debate to-day? I personally think . . ."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" There has been a change of policy. It is all important. You must allot a day for it, Sir, though not from 11 a.m. till 9 p.m. as in the other House, at least from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. as usual."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" May I suggest that we may ask the Hon. Minister for food to finish his speech to-day?"

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THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ The hon. Member seems to have one set of figures different from the one with the Government.” It seems as though there is going to be a fight about figures.”

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—“ We have no papers on hand relating to food. We have something to talk about it. We are not prepared with the subject, whereas we came to a certain extent prepared with this subject.”

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ Then we shall go on with this Bill.”

K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ Sir, what is the decision that we have come to? We have been discussing the matter, but we have not come to any decision, nor have you given any ruling.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ No, not yet. I think the hon. Member is going to move the Bill.”

11-45 a.m. ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ On a point of order, Mr. President, in a matter like this, I do not think there need be any controversy, because even if the Bill is delayed, the delay is after all going to be only for a day or two. I do not think that the Government are going to lose anything by bringing the matter again on Monday. If we are going to discuss the Bill on Monday, there will be some leisure for us and we can give some cool thinking to the Bill and the Hon. Minister-in-charge will also come back by that day. I would therefore submit, Mr. President, that we may postpone the consideration of this Bill to Monday next.”

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ That will be encroaching on the Christmas holidays, Sir.”

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—“ Under rule 15 (2) of the Council Rules, the food debate cannot be taken up now unless you treat it as a business of a formal or ceremonial nature.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ I personally would like the Hon. Leader of the House to take up this Bill on Monday.”

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ I have got a programme, Sir, on the 22nd. I have to be away from Madras on that day.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ I am only speaking about this Bill and not the food debate. Why not take up this Bill on Monday? ”

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—“ Sir, then what are we going to do to-day? That will not be fair either to us or the hon. Members of this House who have been asked to meet to-day to get on with this Bill.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ I do not agree with the Hon. Minister that it will not be fair to the House. I may inform the House that as regards certain provisions of the Bill, I had a discussion with the Hon. Mr. Kala Venkata Rao and in fact, he has promised

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me to look into certain important points. I have also discussed them with the Secretary of the Department, Mr. Venkateswaran. He has also promised to look into them. It is from that point of view that I should like the Hon. Minister to be present here to introduce the Bill, but by this, I mean no reflection on the Hon. Minister for Agriculture."

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" Sir, You are not of course, going to intercede in the debate, but you are only going to talk to the Hon. Minister for Revenue on certain points, which you think need elucidation. Therefore, I do not think there is any harm in proceeding with this Bill, to-day, Sir."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I am not going to take part in the debate, but if the Hon. Minister for Revenue is here, I can talk things over either in this House or outside."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Sir, the very fact that the Hon. Minister for Agriculture has got a written speech in his hand shows that he is not thoroughly prepared with the Bill."

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" I am sure, Dr. John knows very well that whenever he has got a case to argue before a court, he certainly goes prepared with that case. Because I have got a written speech in my hand, therefore I have come well prepared with this Bill, Sir. Dr. John need not therefore be under the impression that I am not thorough with this Bill."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Sir, the Bill must become law before the end of this year. Since Christmas holidays are coming on very soon, we cannot simply postpone it for the next year."

SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—" Mr. President, taking all things into consideration, I really feel that the subject in the agenda may be taken up to-day without making any further delay. After all, Sir, this Bill was discussed threadbare on its introduction in the other House, and then the Select Committee sat over it and the Bill as emerged from the Select Committee was also discussed by the Assembly in all its aspects, and the Hon. Revenue Minister was present there to explain every point raised in that House. Now the same Bill is before this House for its consideration. We all know that this Bill will become an Act without even the change of a comma or a semi-colon. That is why none of the hon. Members of this House has given notice of any amendments to the Bill, though it was before us for a very long time. So, I think, it is not necessary that we must wait till the arrival of the Hon. Minister for Revenue. One Minister is as good as another. As my hon. Friend Mr. Narayanaswami Nayudu said, one pilot is as good as another. To-day the Hon. Mr. Madhava Menon who has studied the Bill very well, will be able to pilot the Bill as efficiently as the Hon. Revenue Minister. But some of us want that he must be present here to hear our arguments. No doubt, our arguments will be reported in the proceedings verbatim and the Hon. Revenue Minister, when he arrives

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here will certainly lose no time in reading the report of the proceedings. There is no danger therefore of our arguments being ignored or lost sight of. So, Sir, I think it is unnecessary for the House to postpone the discussion of this Bill either between 6 to 9 a.m. to-morrow or to the 22nd. Our agenda has been already fixed and we need not make any change now. That is my feeling, Sir, in this matter."

MRS. HENSMAN :—" On a point of information, Mr. President, are we to understand from the last speaker that second-hand opinions read in the papers or listened to, are sufficient for the conduct of business in this House? "

SRI B. NARAYANASWAMI NAYUDU :—" Sir, hon. Members must know that the Bill is not for consideration by this House. It is only for passing the Bill that it has been brought here. So we need have no objection in passing it at once in this House."

* K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Mr. President, I am sure you must have realized the strong feelings on this side of the House that the Member-in-charge of the Bill ought to be here on a matter of very vital importance to this House and to the Province, because they feel that they also owe very great responsibilities to their constituencies who have sent them here. You have heard, Sir, opinions expressed from all quarters of the House that the Hon. Minister for Revenue who is in charge of this Bill ought to be here to get it through and that even if the Bill be delayed for a day or two, we do not mind it. But the Government seem to be persistent in their attitude that the Bill should be passed here and now. Sir, I feel that the Government are not going to respect the feelings of the Opposition and in these circumstances, we, the Opposition are not going to take part in the discussion of the Bill."

THE HON. SRI K. MADHAVA MENON :—" Sir, if the food debate is to be taken up just now, this Bill can be taken up to-morrow evening. It is not possible for us to bring up the food debate day-after-to-morrow. The only other day that is available is Monday, when most of us have programmed to leave Madras and there are practical difficulties in bringing it forward on Monday. That is why we say that it is not possible to hold on this Bill till Monday or any other day. It is not at all our intention, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition seems to suggest, that we do not want to hear the views of the Opposition. It is rather unfortunate that he should have said like that. That is not at all our idea and the absence of the Hon. Minister for Revenue, as everybody knows, is due to an accident and that is why he was not able to be present here to get through the Bill. In these circumstances, if we are not going to take up the food debate to-day, I must press, Sir, that we must go on with this Bill. (After a pause) Let me proceed with the Bill, Sir.

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" Sir, this Government have decided upon three legislative measures to achieve what they regard as a matter of fundamental importance, viz., the amelioration of the conditions under which the ryots in the estate areas of this province live. The first of these is the Madras Estates Communal, Forest and Private Lands (Prohibition of Alienation) Act, 1947, which, the House will recall, became law during the last session of this House and which (also by the accidental absence of the Hon'ble the Revenue Minister) I had the honour of piloting through this House. That was a purely interim measure designed to prevent landholders from alienating forest and communal lands during the interval till the main Abolition Bill could be passed into law. The second measure, Sir, is the one which I am now presenting to the House. It is also a purely interim measure and is intended to give immediate legislative sanction to a proposal to which the Congress Party has long been wedded, viz., to reduce the high rents in zamindari areas. The House, Sir, will perhaps recollect that in the Estates Land Revenue Bill of 1947 which the Prakasam Ministry published in January this year and which they had intended to introduce into the Legislature, there was a provision to reduce rents with effect from fasli 1356. The present Bill proposes to do this with effect from fasli 1357, i.e., 1947-48. The third measure, Sir, is the main Abolition Bill itself which has been introduced in the Assembly. The debate on the first reading was still in progress when the Assembly was adjourned, having been interrupted more than once on account of the claims of more pressing legislative work. In the Government's view, Sir, all these three Bills go together and are parts of an integrated policy.

" I shall now proceed to explain the object and the scheme of this particular Bill a little more fully :

' In most of the estates in this Province, particularly in those in the Telugu districts, the rent levied by the landholder from his ryots is substantially in excess of the assessment charged by the Government on similar land in the neighbouring ryotwari area and is beyond the capacity of the ryots to pay. The zamindari system has perpetuated an assessment which has no relation to the productive capacity of the land which varies from district to district. It has further led to absence of contact between the Government and the actual cultivator and has acted as a brake in regard to agricultural improvement. The irrigation works in estates are mostly in a state of disrepair. The complexities of the zamindari system have led to an immense volume of litigation. Many of the records in the offices of zamindars are indifferently maintained and the peasantry, most of whom are illiterate, are at the mercy of unscrupulous agents. The zamindari system has rarely, if ever, been as efficient as the revenue system in Government areas. There is thus discontent among estate ryots and they have been agitating for an improvement in their condition. The agrarian and political situation in estates, especially in the Circars, is worsening day by day, and there is a growing agitation for the

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reduction of the high rents prevailing in estates. The Government therefore decided that something should be done at once to allay the discontent prevailing in the minds of the estate ryots and that, pending the major legislation for the abolition of the zamindari system which they had then under contemplation, the rents prevailing in estates should be reduced with immediate effect to the level of assessments in the neighbouring ryotwari areas. The present Bill, Sir, seeks to give effect to this decision.

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noon.

" The Bill provides for the appointment of Special Officers for the purpose of recommending fair and equitable rates of rents for the ryoti lands in the estates. The Special Officer will first determine the average rate of cash rent per acre now prevailing for each class of ryoti land in each village in an estate as also the average rate of assessment per acre in respect of each of the said classes of land in the nearest ryotwari area in which conditions are generally similar to those obtaining in the estate village. He will then compare the average rates of cash rent determined for the estate village with the average rates of assessment determined for the ryotwari area, and after making due allowance for any difference in the conditions of these two cases, determine the extent, if any, to which the rates of rent payable for each class of ryoti land in the estate village should be reduced and the rate of rent payable for each such class of land after such reduction. In the case of an estate village where no cash rents are prevalent, the Special Officer will choose the nearest village in the same estate where conditions are similar to those obtaining in the former village or where there is no such village in that estate, the nearest village in the nearest estate where these requirements are satisfied and compare the cash rents prevailing in that village and in the nearest ryotwari area and apply the results obtained by him to the estate village in question. Although the general scheme is thus to adopt the village as the unit of the operations (so as to include all inam villages) provision has been made to treat a group of similar villages alike, so as to secure expedition. The Special Officer will submit his recommendations to the Board of Revenue and the Board will submit the recommendations with its remarks to the Government. The Government will, after considering the recommendations of the Special Officer and the Board of Revenue, fix the rates of rent payable in respect of each class of ryoti land in each estate village. The order of the Government will be published in *Fort St. George Gazette*. In no case will the Special Officer have power to determine and in no case will the Government have power to fix any rent for any land which is in excess of that now paid for the land. When an order is published by the Government the ryot will not have to pay rent for any ryoti land held by him at a rate exceeding that fixed in the order notwithstanding anything contained in the Estates Land Act.

" Having decided to reduce rents, Sir, the only practicable method was to approximate them as far as possible, to the level of

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assessments in the adjacent ryotwari areas. In fact, in the main Bill we propose to replace the existing system by a regular ryotwari settlement in all estates. We had also to proceed on the footing that speed was the essence of the business, consistent of course, with the complexity and the volume of the work involved. That being so, I am free to admit that we have been compelled to adopt, in one or two matters the second best solutions. For example, the original proposal was to do away entirely with grain-rents wherever they prevail as in some estates in Ramnad and Chittoor districts. But we found, Sir, that the commutation of existing grain rents into cash rents would take far too long and so we were reluctantly forced to decide that pending a regular ryotwari settlement, the grain rents in these areas should continue but should be reduced practically in the same ratio as cash rents. The same reason was largely responsible for the retention of existing rents where they happened to be lower than the ryotwari assessments.

" In the Select Committee and elsewhere the main attack on this Bill, as on the connected measures, has been over the decision to include within its scope all estates as defined in section 3 (2) of the Estates Land Act, which, as you, Sir, are aware, means also whole inam villages. The attack has proceeded on the basis that inams are entirely different in nature from zamindaris and that there is no justification for treating the two alike in this or any other matter. The Government, Sir, do not subscribe to that view entirely and will explain the reasons more fully when the main Bill comes up for consideration. At the moment, it is sufficient to say that this Bill seeks, in the main, to better the condition of the ryot who tills the land and from this point of view the inam ryot, is in many areas, far worse placed than the zamindari ryot. As the House is aware, the 1936 amendment to the Estates Land Act laid down that the rents existing on 1st November 1933 should be regarded as fixed rents and particularly in areas where rent is paid in kind, the effect of this provision has been to legalize the unconscionably high rates which the ryot has to pay. If relief to the ryot is to be our object, Sir, I cannot see how Government could leave inams out of this Bill.

" I shall now proceed, Sir, to explain very briefly the not inconsiderable changes made in the Select Committee of the other House. They are 4 in number :—

(1) The first of these relates to the retention of grain rents which are now proposed to be reduced in the same ratio as cash rents. I have already referred to this matter briefly. The Bill, as published envisaged commutation of all these rents. The only reason for this change was that we found we could not give quick relief if we accepted commutation.

(2) The Select Committee made a provision making the reduced rents recoverable, as arrears of land revenue. This, Sir, is a major concession to landholders. We were impressed by the

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argument, that due to the uncertainties created in the minds of tenants by the various items of pending legislation relating to estates, landholders found it difficult to collect their rents. Although Government have taken on a tremendous job under this provision, they regard it as the just thing to do. At the same time they found it impossible to accept the proposal urged by some quarters that they should undertake collection here and now of the existing high rates. That, Sir, would be inconsistent with their policy to reduce these rates with effect from fasli 1357.

(3) A third major change accepted by the Government at the Select Committee is that contained in clause (5) by which they undertake to reimburse to religious, charitable and educational institutions the loss of income due to rent reduction. This requires no explanation. Government are aware that they are undertaking a big responsibility over this, but having regard to the demand from practically all sections of opinion, they consider it to be their duty to do so.

(4) The fourth change is that contained in clause 7. This requires a little explanation. As the House may be aware, the scheme of the 1936 amendment to the Estates Land Act was this: It brought all whole inam villages within the scope of the Act by amending the definition in section 3 (2) (d). If the landholder of an inam village newly brought within that definition claimed kudivaram rights in the village he had to file an application before a Tribunal constituted under the Act and to establish his rights. Actually only in about 2 per cent of these cases was this right so established. Even in such cases the ryots could acquire the kudivaram by payment of one year's rent as compensation. It has been brought to our notice that because of the poor compensation prescribed for the kudivaram right or for other cause, many inamdars did not choose to go before the Tribunal but let out the lands to lessees for cultivation for one or two years claiming the entire inam as iruvaram. We understand that large tracts of such land belonging to religious and charitable institutions exist in districts like Tanjore. These lessees are in many cases not cultivators at all, but contractors who take up large extents in auction purely for a profit and then sub-lease smaller extents to the actual cultivators. Whatever the strict legal position, which is by no means free from difficulty and can be gone into more carefully in the main Bill, Government were not prepared to give to these big lessees who in many cases have no vital interest in the cultivation of the land, the benefit of the reduced rate of rent which, it might be argued, the Bill confers on them. They decided: therefore, to include a specific provision in this regard. Incidentally, the absence of such a provision would have reduced the income of many religious and charitable institutions and consequently thrown a greater burden on the general revenues, which it would be difficult to justify on any grounds of incontestable public good.

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"The Assembly made certain changes which are comparatively minor in character. The more important of these are:—

(a) Sub-clause 4 of clause 2 which enables the Special Officer to deal with a group of smaller villages in the same fashion. The object is merely to save time.

(b) Certain drafting changes were made in clause 5 because it was brought to our notice that in the case of religious and charitable endowments made within the last 5 years there might arise practical difficulties in applying this clause which adopts the average income of the last 5 faslis as the criterion. We were informed that there were a number of such endowments in the northern districts of this Presidency.

(c) Clause 6 (original bill) was deleted completely. Our original intention was to make the reduced rents under this Bill purely provisional and to date back the regularly settled assessment under the abolition Bill to fasli 1357 and to make consequential adjustments. That would have been the strictly logical course, no doubt, but further examination revealed the possibility of numerous practical difficulties arising in the working. In the first place two sets of adjustments will have to be made—the first as soon as rents under this Bill are ascertained and the second after the regular ryotwari settlement. These adjustments in the case of individual holdings would require an enormous staff for doing the necessary book-keeping and the resulting advantage to the ryot or the landholder would be negligible. On the other hand there was the likelihood of considerable confusion in the minds of every one concerned. Secondly the provision in the proviso to clause 3 (2), viz., that the existing rents, where they are lower than ryotwari rates, should not be enhanced combined with the possibility, under the provision of the main Abolition Bill, that the areas in unsurveyed estates might increase on survey and thus put up the demand from the ryot, might well nigh make this subsequent accounting an impossible task. For these reasons we decided to sacrifice the requirements of strict theory to practical convenience and to make the rents as reduced under this Bill the legal rents payable from fasli 1357 to the fasli in which the estate is finally taken over. We are confident that that interval will not be unduly long.

"Sir, I have not much more to say. I hope I have in some measure succeeded, in the absence of my hon'ble colleague who knows far more about these matters than I do, in explaining to the House the main provisions of this Bill and the reasons therefor. After all, Sir, on the principal question with which we are concerned in this Bill, viz., the reduction of the high rates of rent now prevailing in certain estates to the level of the assessments prevailing in adjacent Government areas, there can be no disagreement whatever. I go further, Sir, and venture to assert, that on this question, there will be unanimity of support for the Government in this House. Even the spokesmen of zamindars have

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accepted the principle. Whatever criticism or comment there may be on other matters, they are comparatively speaking very minor issues and I appeal to the House to consider the provisions of this measure from that angle. With these words, Sir, I commend the Bill for the acceptance of the House, and trust that it will be passed into law quickly. I venture to remind the House, again, Sir, that time is of the essence of the matter both as regards the passing of this Bill into law and the operations which the Special Officer has to conduct under it.

“ Sir, I move—

‘ that the Bill be taken into consideration at once.’ ”

MR. PRESIDENT:—“ I think the House will be glad to learn that a working settlement has been reached. This Bill will be taken up for further consideration on Saturday. To-morrow at 4 o'clock, we will meet for the food debate and finish it. I suppose that is acceptable to all parts of the House. (An hon. Member: ‘ We did not hear, Sir, may I know what the arrangement is?’) The further consideration of this Bill will be taken up on Saturday at 11 and finished on that day. So far as the food debate is concerned, we will meet to-morrow evening at 4 and finish it.”

K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR:—“ Sir, we are very thankful to the Government and to you, Mr. President, for this arrangement and for honouring the feelings of this House, and I think this will continue in all our relations in this House.”

MR. PRESIDENT:—“ I may assure hon. Members of the opposition that I will be as considerate to their feelings as to the feelings on this side, and I am sure Government also are not actuated by any feeling of disrespect or discourtesy towards the opposition. If at all, they were anxious to save some money, if possible. That was the only idea uppermost in their mind. I would also request the opposition not to make up their minds so suddenly and leave the House in future.”

The House will now adjourn and meet again at 4 p.m. to-morrow evening.